

Lt. Gov. Treadwell Commemorates the Cordova "Coal Party"

May 3, 2011, Juneau – Lt. Governor Mead Treadwell will recognize the 100th anniversary of the Cordova "Coal Party" on May 4 at 2:30 PM at Marine Park on the Juneau Warf.

In 1911, over 300 Cordova businessmen and citizens protested high fuel prices and federal government encroachment by dumping foreign coal into Orca Bay. Lt. Governor Treadwell will commemorate the event by reading Governor Sean Parnell's executive proclamation naming May 4 as Cordova "Coal Party" Recognition Day, and every year on this day, we will remember our commitment to protecting our liberty.

Who: Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell

What: Cordova "Coal Party" Commemoration

When: Wednesday, May 4, 2011 at 2:30 PM

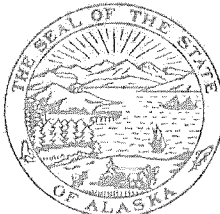
Where: Marine Park at the Juneau Wharf, Juneau, AK

Contact: Michelle Toohey (907) 269-7460

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STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by Governor Sean Parnell

WHEREAS, on May 4, 1911, nearly 300 Cordova businessmen and citizens marched to the wharf of the Alaska Steamship Company and shoveled hundreds of tons of British coal into Orca Bay as a protest against federal denial of access to Alaskan resources; and

WHEREAS, Cordova residents were stymied by President Roosevelt's 1906 executive order prohibiting additional coal mining on the public domain in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, at that time, coal reserves in the Chugach National Forest were inaccessible and Alaskans were forced to import coal. Further, coal prices were exorbitant and industry stymied; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans boldly stood against heavy-handed federal intrusion that compromised the Alaskan way of life; and

WHEREAS, today, Alaska once again has a list of grievances against the federal government, and in order to promote economic prosperity, we must stand against federal overreach for the right to access and responsibly develop our resources; and

WHEREAS, from offshore permitting delays, to ocean zoning, to the effort to lock up the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska, these federal actions damage our economy by delaying jobs, increasing development costs, domestic energy productions; and

WHEREAS, the responsible development of Alaska's resources will create jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign imports, provide domestic economic development; and improve our economic and national security.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim May 4, 2011 as:

Cordova "Coal Party" Recognition Day

in Alaska, and encourage all Alaskans to let our federal government know that its actions and mandates are unwarranted and will not go unanswered, as our state's vast resources are vitally important to the future of our state and nation.

Dated: May 3, 2011



A handwritten signature of Sean Parnell in cursive script.

Sean Parnell, Governor
who has also authorized the
seal of the State of Alaska to
be affixed to this proclamation.

WARRANTS FOR ALASKANS.

Fifty Arrests to be Made for Dumping
Coal in the Bay at Cordova.

CORDOVA, Alaska, May 8.—After a conference between ^{*}United States Marshal Harvey Sullivan and District Attorney George Walter, it was announced yesterday that fifty warrants would be issued for the arrest of the men known to have participated in the "coal party" Thursday when Canadian coal, piled on the wharf, was dumped into the bay.

The announcement caused a storm of protest, and the officials decided to postpone action for a time and give the angry citizens a chance to regain their composure.

The New York Times

Published: May 9, 1911

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** Grand father of Mayor Dan Sullivan*

ALASKANS TO SEE WILSON.

If Governor Will Solve Coal Question
They Will Embrace Democracy.

Special to The New York Times.

SEATTLE, Wash., May 8.—Falcon Joslin, 6 Broadway, New York City, President of the Tanana Valley Railroad, and other prominent Alaskan political leaders, will confer with Woodrow Wilson upon the latter's visit to Seattle, May 20, in regard to the Alaska coal land question and situation, which are daily becoming more desperate.

According to Alaskans who pass the Winter in Seattle, the district is almost unanimous in turning down the Administration and is strongly in favor of Gov. Wilson, if he will turn a willing ear to Alaska's appeals for relief in the matter of the forced purchases of foreign coal, when its own coal is at its doors but unmined by reason of executive orders.

A. J. Daly, National Democratic Committeeman from the Iditarod, unable to remain here to meet Gov. Wilson, gave out before leaving for Skagway last night that Alaska was ready to turn to the Democracy for relief, and this latest development in the coal question since the Cordova "coal party" last Thursday, was confirmed to-day by Mr. Joslin.

"I intend with other Alaskans to go into the Alaskan coal land question very carefully and thoroughly with Gov. Wilson when he reaches Seattle, for I received no satisfaction from either President Taft or his new appointee to the office of Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Fisher, when I was in Washington a few weeks ago," said Mr. Joslin to-day. "This coal question, to Alaskans at least, is as big an issue as Canadian reciprocity or the Mexican intervention, and before the long-suffering Alaskans are through, the present Administration will be well aware of that fact."

The New York Times

Published: May 9, 1911

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ALASKA

SAGA OF A BOLD LAND

From Russian fur traders to the Gold Rush,
extraordinary railroads, World War II, the oil boom,
and the fight over ANWR



WALTER R. BORNEMAN

Preserving the Bounty

As armies of gold seekers and others sought to take from the land, there were also stirrings that parts of it should be preserved inviolate at all costs. The first decade of the twentieth century saw the establishment of Alaska's two national forests and its first national park, initial lobbying for a second national park, and the first major confrontation over the development of its natural resources. While most Alaskans bristled at what they considered federal government attempts to impede the territory's growth, others cheered the reservation of these enormous tracts of lands.

In 1891, Congress passed the Forest Reserve Act, authorizing the president to place federally owned public domain lands into "forest reserves," the equivalent of what would soon be called national forests. Within a decade, three presidents transferred some 50 million acres nationwide into these reserves. These included Afognak Island north of Kodiak that was set aside by Benjamin Harrison in 1892 to protect its salmon-spawning streams, timber, and animals. The Afognak Island Forest Reserve, which later became part of Chugach National Forest, was the first federal conservation designation in Alaska.

After 1901, Theodore Roosevelt enlarged the system of forest reserves with a passion nurtured by his early days in the Dakotas, as well as his close association with the Boone and Crockett Club. Roosevelt named Gifford Pinchot, a well-connected advocate of scientific forest management, as chief of the Bureau of Forestry. Then, with Pinchot's wholehearted support, Roosevelt proceeded to set aside another 150 million acres of reserves over the next seven years. When development interests finally lobbied Congress to pass a revision to the 1891 law limiting such widespread presidential discretion, Roosevelt quickly huddled with Pinchot and reserved another 16 million acres of the best of the remaining parcels before the law took effect. In 1907, at Roosevelt's urging, this system of forest reserves became national forests under the administration of the U.S. Forest Service, and Pinchot was appointed its first chief forester.⁶⁸

For his first Alaskan act, Roosevelt designated 4.5 million acres scattered among the islands of southeast Alaska as the Alexander Archipelago

Forest Reserve on August 20, 1902. Five years later, he signed an executive order creating Tongass National Forest with another 2.25-million acres. This first Tongass National Forest encompassed the mainland from Portland Canal north to the Unuk River on Behm Canal, essentially the area now designated as Misty Fjords National Monument. In February 1909, during Roosevelt's last full month in office, he combined the Alexander Archipelago Forest Reserve with these Tongass lands to make one national forest with almost 7 million acres. Over the ensuing years, more additions were made, and today the 17-million-acre Tongass National Forest is the largest in the United States.

Meanwhile in southcentral Alaska, Roosevelt created Chugach National Forest on July 23, 1907. Its name (CHEW-gatch) evolved from the Russian understanding of what the Natives around Prince William Sound called themselves, Chugatz or Tchougatskio. Originally, the Chugach encompassed about 5 million acres stretching across the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound, but six major boundary adjustments, including adding and then deleting Afognak Island and later transferring areas to national-wildlife-refuge and national-park status, were made by 1980.

The purpose of both the Tongass and Chugach National Forests—indeed the initial purpose of all national forests—was to prevent the selective clear-cutting of the best and most accessible timber while leaving behind denuded and quickly eroded landscapes. The forest service's charge was the prudent management of renewable resources to ensure their longevity. But as was to be the case many times in Alaska during the next century, the creation of these first national forests left unsatisfied parties at both ends of the spectrum.

A majority of Alaskans were dismayed and some more than a little confused by the reservations. Their response was, "Hey, wait a minute, for a generation the federal government has been stifling growth up here through benign neglect, and now that it's finally paying some attention, it's telling us that we can't use or develop much of the best land." At the other end of the spectrum there were the diehard, "preserve the wilderness at any cost" advocates. One of them was John Muir, who crossed swords early on with Gifford Pinchot over the concept of multiple-use management, a dilemma—or reality, depending on one's viewpoint—that continues to confront land managers to the present day.

In southeast Alaska, where much of the territory's population then lived, the combined Tongass National Forest encompassed a high per-

centage of the land most suitable for homesteading and agricultural development. But at least there were trees in the southeast. Much of the land set aside for the Chugach was not tree-covered, and many thought that it was "at the very best too marginal an area to be reserved as a national forest."⁶⁹ But southcentral Alaska had coal, and there Theodore Roosevelt really threw the fat into the fire.

As the gold rush waned, many Alaskans were banking on coal to be the economic savior for the territory. As part of his Progressive thinking, however, Roosevelt issued an executive order in 1906 prohibiting additional coal mining on the public domain in Alaska. Coal reserves were further locked up by the initial creation of Chugach National Forest and its subsequent expansions to include the bulk of the Bering River coal fields around Karalla. Through a strawman named Clarence Cunningham, the Morgan-Guggenheim syndicate held many unpatented claims in this area. Pinchot encouraged Roosevelt to make the withdrawals to counter what Pinchot thought was the syndicate's plot to corner the market on Alaska's coal. For his part, Roosevelt believed that such withdrawals would encourage Congress to create a coal-leasing system that would both be open to competition and also provide a source of revenue.

After Roosevelt left office, his handpicked successor, William Howard Taft, continued these policies, but Congress failed to create a leasing system and the coal remained untouched. Finally, Pinchot and Taft's pro-development secretary of the interior, Richard Ballinger, who at one point had represented Cunningham in his attempts to patent the claims, had a severe falling-out. The whole story is long and complicated, but the gist of this first Alaskan battle of conservation versus development is that it led directly to Pinchot's firing by Ballinger and Ballinger's subsequent resignation. At least indirectly, it fueled the political schism that saw Roosevelt and the Progressives challenge Taft as a third party in 1912.

For Alaska, the coal reservations had the effect of not only impeding mining operations but also discouraging railroad development. No one was very interested in financing a railroad that had to operate on imported coal. The result was a double whammy. First, railroads, steamships, and locals were paying \$11.00 to \$12.00 per ton for imported coal when high-grade coal was readily available from the Bering fields for \$2.50 to \$3.50 per ton. Second, coal tonnage that was historically a ready and reliable source of freight revenue for the West's railroads was nonexistent.⁷⁰

Nowhere was the resentment higher than in Cordova, where the completion of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway to Kennecott

was supposed to be just the first step in ensuring the town's economic future. Kennecott, after all, was initially only to be a branch line on a route that led all the way to Fairbanks. On May 4, 1911, with visions of tea being dumped into Boston Harbor, 300 Cordova businessmen and citizens armed themselves with shovels and marched to the wharf of the Alaska Steamship Company and proceeded to shovel several hundred tons of imported British Columbia coal into Orca Bay. When Richard J. Barry, the company's general agent, demanded that this Cordova Coal Party cease, he was met with continued shoveling and shouts of "Give us Alaska coal."

If there were indeed parallels to be drawn with the Boston Tea Party, some, including the *Seattle Times*, were quick to point out the decidedly Alaskan character of the Cordova affair. The Bostonians of 1773 had gone "in dead of night . . . and disguised as Indians," the paper noted, whereas the Alaskans marched unabashedly in broad daylight. Even the far-off *Philadelphia Bulletin* called the event "a demonstration of a not unreasonable impatience with the dilatory federal policy relating to the development of Alaskan resources."⁷¹

Meanwhile in nearby Karalla, which was still hoping to become the gateway to the Bering coal fields, Gifford Pinchot was burned in effigy and a flurry of posters plastered around town that proclaimed:

PINCHOT, MY POLICY

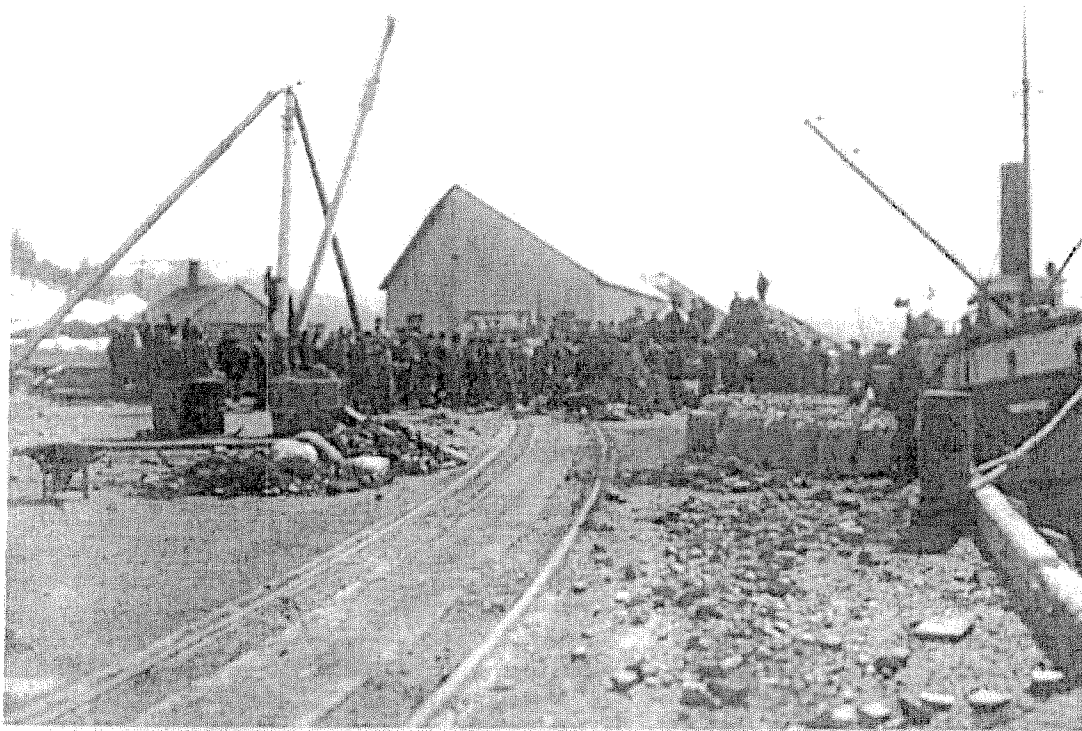
No patents to coal lands!

All timber in forest reserves!

Bottle up Alaska!

Save Alaska for all time to come!⁷²

Those words turned out to be mild (and representative) compared to what journalist George F. Baldwin later wrote about Pinchot after the forester had visited Alaska: "When the high priest of conservation, the prince of shadow dancers, recently visited Alaska to gloat over his handiwork of empty houses, deserted villages, dying towns, arrested development, bankrupt pioneers, and the blasted hopes of sturdy, self-reliant American citizens, it is a striking comment on the law-abiding character of our people that he came back at all."⁷³ It's probably safe to say that Baldwin was not on John Muir's mailing list. Congress finally passed an Alaska coal-leasing bill in 1914.



Alaska State Library - Historical Collections

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

RESOLUTION NO. 2322

A Resolution of the Assembly of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Commemorating the Cordova Coal Party of May 4, 1911, Focusing Attention on the Federal Government's Current Stranglehold on Alaska, and Calling on the President of the United States, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, U.S. Senate, and Congress to Develop Common Sense Policies that Allow Alaska and the Rest of the Nation to Utilize the Nation's Abundant Resources in a Safe, Environmentally Sound Manner that Serves the Best Interests of Americans; and Providing for an Effective Date

RECITALS

- A. WHEREAS**, as part of his "Progressive thinking," President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order in 1906 prohibiting additional coal mining within the public domain in Alaska; and
- B. WHEREAS**, coal reserves were further locked up by the creation of the Chugach National Forest in 1907 and its subsequent expansion to include the bulk of the Bering River coal fields around Katalla; and
- C. WHEREAS**, President William Howard Taft, who succeeded Theodore Roosevelt as President of the nation, continued these same policies and the coal remained untouchable; and
- D. WHEREAS**, for Alaska, the coal reservations had the effect of not only impeding mining operations but also construction of railroads and other important development; and
- E. WHEREAS**, railroads, steamships, and locals were paying \$11.00 to \$12.00 per ton for imported coal when high-grade coal was readily available from the Bering fields for \$2.50 to \$3.50 per ton; and
- F. WHEREAS**, coal tonnage that was historically a ready and reliable source of freight revenue for the West's railroads was unavailable to railroads in Alaska; and
- G. WHEREAS**, nowhere was the resentment over the actions by Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft higher than in Cordova, where the completion of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway to Kennecott was supposed to be the first step

in ensuring a route that led all the way to Fairbanks; and

- H. **WHEREAS**, on May 4, 1911, with visions of tea being dumped into Boston Harbor on December 16, 1773, three hundred Cordova businessmen and citizens armed themselves with shovels and marched to the wharf of the Alaska Steamship Company and proceeded to shovel several hundred tons of imported British Columbia coal into Orca Bay; when Richard J. Barry, the company's general agent, demanded that this "Cordova Coal Party" cease, he was met with continued shoveling and shouts of "Give us Alaska Coal;" and
- I. **WHEREAS**, there were indeed parallels to be drawn between the Cordova Coal Party and the Boston Tea Party; some, including the *Seattle Times*, were quick to point out the decidedly Alaskan character of the Cordova affair: The Bostonians of 1773 had gone "in the dead of night . . . and disguised as Indians," the paper noted, whereas the Alaskans marched unabashedly in broad daylight; even the far-off *Philadelphia Bulletin* called the event "a demonstration of a not unreasonable impatience with the dilatory federal policy relating to the development of Alaskan resources;"
- J. **WHEREAS**, in nearby Katalla, which was still hoping to become the gateway to the Bering coal fields, Gifford Pinchot was burned in effigy amid a flurry of posters plastered around town that proclaimed:
- PINCHOT, MY POLICY
Not patents to coal lands!
All timber in forest reserves!
Bottle up Alaska!
Save Alaska for all time to come!
- K. **WHEREAS**, the words proclaimed in Katalla were mild compared to what journalist George E. Baldwin later wrote about Pinchot after the forester visited Alaska: "When the high priest of conservation, the prince of shadow dancers, recently visited Alaska to gloat over his handiwork of empty houses, deserted villages, dying towns, arrested development, bankrupt pioneers, and blasted hopes of sturdy, self-reliant American citizens, it is a striking comment on the law-abiding character of our people that he came back at all;" and
- L. **WHEREAS**, a century after the Cordova Coal Party, federal involvement in Alaska continues to obstruct and stop the development of the vast resources of the state; and
- M. **WHEREAS**, the United States, particularly Alaska, has huge storehouses of energy that lie untapped due to misguided federal policies as recently addressed by Congressman Devin Nunes:

[H.R. 5899, A Roadmap for America's Energy Future] expands oil production in the far reaches of northern Alaska, off our shores, and in the lower 48 states through oil shale deposits.

"Due to misguided government policies, many of our domestic energy resources sit idle, untapped and underutilized. The United States has an estimated two trillion barrels of oil shale. This is more than seven times the amount of crude oil reserves found in Saudi Arabia, and is enough to meet current U.S. demand for over 200 years. Tapping this homegrown resource would not only help address a huge component of our domestic energy needs, but would provide thousands of new jobs throughout the West- a region currently suffering from the highest comprehensive unemployment in the country. With soaring unemployment and rising energy costs, it's time we put Americans back to work and domestic resources into play. That is precisely what the Energy Roadmap does;

and

- N. WHEREAS**, the federal government, through its misguided policies has:
- 1) damaged not only Alaska's economic future but that of our entire country by not developing the energy reserves of Alaska and the rest of the nation;
 - 2) exported our money instead of keeping our money at home;
 - 3) outsourced our energy jobs to other countries instead of hiring Americans;
 - 4) increased our debt and inflated our currency;
 - 5) increased our negative trade imbalance; and
 - 6) relied on other countries including those whose interests are often adversarial to the United States to set the price for energy supplies;

NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE FACTS, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH as follows:

Section 1. That the Ketchikan Gateway Borough recognizes May 4, 2011, as the 100th anniversary of the Cordova Coal Party patriots who took symbolic action to focus attention on the fact that the federal government's misguided policies were actively damaging Alaska's future.

Section 2. One hundred years later, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly passes this resolution to focus attention on the fact that the federal government has worsened its stranglehold on Alaska and continues to actively damage not only Alaska's future but the future of the entire nation through continued misguided policies.

Section 3. The Assembly calls on the President of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the U.S. Senate, and Congress to develop common sense energy policies, land use

policies, and other public policies that allow Alaska and the rest of the nation to utilize their abundant energy resources in a safe, environmentally sound manner that serves the best interests of Americans.

Section 4. This resolution is effective immediately.

Section 5. A copy of this resolution shall be provided immediately to:

- 1) President Barack Obama,
- 2) U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar,
- 3) Senator Lisa Murkowski,
- 4) Senator Mark Begich,
- 5) Congressman Don Young, and
- 6) Congressman Devin Nunes.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2011.

Dave Kiffer, Borough Mayor

Kacie Paxton, Borough Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Scott A. Brandt-Erichsen, Borough Attorney

EFFECTIVE DATE:			
ROLL CALL	YES	NO	ABSENT
Bailey			
Harrington			
Moran			
Phillips			
Rotecki			
Salazar			
Shoemaker			
Mayor (tie votes only)			
4 AFFIRMATIVE VOTES REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE			